# LABOUR MONTHLY

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EDITOR · R PALME DUTT

# The NEW BATTLE for BRITAIN

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*Notes of the Month*

# THE NEW BATTLE FOR BRITAIN

WITH this issue the LABOUR MONTHLY offers New Year greetings to old and new readers in a format which represents a first step forward from wartime limitations. War restrictions struck our journal harder than most; since our circulation had increased sevenfold in the first two years of the war, and then had to be cut down to a paper ration based on one-sixth of our pre-war circulation. Hence the peculiar devices we adopted during these recent years, which must have tried the patience and eyesight of all readers, to spin out a limited volume of paper to reach the largest number of readers, making possible a restricted circulation of twenty thousand. Now, with slightly more paper permitted, we have felt the first necessity to advance to a more civilised peacetime form of production, even though this still means restriction of the numbers available. Unfortunately, increased costs compel an increase in price ; but on the basis of this post-war price (which old readers may remember as the original price of our journal) we count on continuous improvement and enlargement, as the paper situation permits. We hope readers will welcome the change and take the opportunity to introduce our journal to new readers. Although we can still not guarantee to supply the full demand, we are taking special steps to give first claim to individual applications for subscriptions, so as to make possible the winning of new readers; and we recommend any who find difficulty in getting copies to take out a postal subscription on the special advantageous terms set out on page 2 of cover.

**Outlook for 1947**

It is customary with the New Year to survey the prospects of the coming year. The questions which fill the minds of all today are obvious. Will 1947 see the foundations laid for peace, or will the world once again move along the path which leads to war? Will the Western Powers and the Soviet Union draw closer together or further apart? What of the American Enigma? What is the American Colossus with the feet of clay preparing for the world? Must we inevitably move into a new world slump even more terrible than that which let loose fascism and the second world war? And what of Britain? Will Britain travel further along the path of the Anglo-American alliance, of overstrained man-power and resources for military and colonial adventures abroad, and of crippled reconstruction at home? Or will the revolt which has opened out on a broadening front in the closing months of 1946 reverse the path in time? The answer to these questions does not lie in the region of prophecy. The answer lies in the deepening political post-war fight for the future which is now developing over the entire world, from Lake Success to



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Paris and Berlin, from the Balkans to India and China, and not least here in Britain.

**World Alignment**

Wherever we turn, this political post-war battle is developing—not less fateful for the future than was the war against fascism from which it has sprung. We can see it in the proceedings of the United Nations at New York, where the Soviet and other democratic representatives are fighting for disarmament, for the prohibition and destruction of the atom bomb, for the unity of the Great Powers to maintain peace and for a democratic settlement in Europe. We can see it in the internal political situation within each country over a wide range, including in this country and the United States. The outcome of this battle will determine whether the victory of the peoples over fascism shall be final and complete, and the world go forward in peace to a new social order, or whether the remnants of fascism and of the enemies of democracy shall be built anew under the protection of the great monopoly interests of the City and Wall Street, leading to great suffering and destruction and eventually a third world war. For no country is the outcome of this battle more critical than for Britain. It is not yet any close prospect of immediate war that is the issue, despite the clamorous agitation of a reckless and influential handful, especially in the United States. What is in question is the formation of a new and dangerous alignment which has its main centre in Washington and the far-flung empire of the dollar; its main auxiliary—its now subsidised and partially controlled auxiliary—in the British Empire; and its breeding-grounds in a hundred plague spots in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. The powerful reactionary interests which are seeking to promote this alignment are systematically working to undo the victory over fascism, and are thus opening the gates to a new hell-flood and future war. The peoples of the world who spilled their blood in torrents to break Hitler and Japan did not do so in order to substitute the rule of Morgan, the Ku Klux Klan and the Vatican. And to those who find it unthinkable that a Labour Government could assist the manoeuvres of an Anglo-American alignment of counter-revolution, let them consider whether they find it equally unthinkable that a Churchill should favour such an alignment, and then let them consider why Churchill lavishes such praise on the present world policy of the Labour Government and its Anglo-American alliance. It is against this menace that the peoples of the world, and not least in this country and in the ranks of British Labour, need now to unite their efforts.

**Europe's Battlefront**

In France the Communist Party, emerging from the elections as the premier party of France and the chosen majority party of the French working people, leads the fight for democracy and national



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independence against the men of Vichy and enemies of the Republic, whose hero is now De Gaulle, replacing Petain. Over the great part of Eastern Europe the peoples have consolidated their front and dealt with their enemies. Franco still holds his blood-bespattered throne in Spain solely thanks to the economic and diplomatic support of Britain and the United States, and their blocking of every attempt to mobilise the United Nations to cleanse this plague-spot of Hitler's ally. In the Nazi-soaked morass of Germany, despite the heroic efforts of the Communists and the Socialist Unity Party and the advance in the Eastern Zone, the situation is still dangerous, especially owing to continued Nazi-industrialist influence in the Anglo-American zones. From Germany Schumacher, the chosen puppet, the new Stresemann and apostle of the Western anti-Soviet orientation, is brought under British official auspices to this country to harangue the German prisoners of war on the "good intentions" of the British authorities, denounce Socialist-Communist unity, demand that a United Germany shall be the centre of a "United Europe" (the old Pan-Europe programme of Hitler and Coudenhove-Kalergi, now inherited by Churchill and Smuts), and denounce the Soviet Union as a "totalitarian" Power—all amid the "loud applause" of his Nazi-trained audience. It is appropriate that Noske, before his recent death, should yet have lived long enough to figure on the platform as the principal ally of Schumacher in Germany—Noske, the butcher of twenty thousand German workers to crush the German revolution in Berlin in 1919, who armed the officers' corps and the monarchist-fascist formations and prepared the way for Hitler. There is need that the record of Social Democracy should be studied anew by the younger generation before they commit themselves to that ill-famed banner.

**Reversing the Roles?**

The new alignment brings a seeming reversal of individual roles. Franco sends greetings to Churchill as the paladin of Western civilisation inheriting Hitler's anti-Communist campaign. Churchill pours praises on the leaders of the Labour Party as the champions of anti-Communism. In Greece Hitler's men, the monarchist-fascists and their battalions that served the Nazi occupation, now serve the British occupation and conduct civil war, with British arms and finance, against the heroic partisans of the Greek people fighting for liberation. In Egypt the national movement, which was called to the helm at the time of Alamein to check the pro-fascist intrigues of the Court, is banned and its supporters shot down by the Palace and Sidky, acting as the agents of British control to impose the Treaty which even the majority of the hand-picked delegation rejected. In India, while Communists who stood against fascism are arrested and even shot in cold blood, the political leaders who were jailed during the war are brought in a plane with the Viceroy to London in order to draw them into the agreement which is intended to develop India as



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a great armed imperialist base in the new front. In China the corrupt Kuomintang clique, which held its armies passive before Japan to concentrate on civil war at home, is backed by American arms and troops to make war on Chinese democracy whose national liberation armies bore the brunt of Chinese fighting against Japan. In Japan Hirohito is protected by MacArthur. The story is familiar from every item of every day's news. The world today is not the world of the nineteen-thirties; the balance of forces is decisively changed. But it is evident that an attempt is being made to build a new alignment which could become not less fateful for the future than in the nineteen-thirties. And once again we in this country are in danger of being ranged by our rulers on the wrong side of the alignment, with the prospect of even more disastrous consequences—unless we intervene in time.

**Where Stands Britain?**

Once again in this new world alignment between the camp of progressive democracy, supporting the United Nations, and the camp of reaction, disrupting the United Nations, Britain, despite its relatively weakened world strength, occupies the key pivotal position. Not in the sense, as some dreamers like to imagine, of the mediator, the neutral, the divinely appointed umpire, the representative of the middle way and the imaginary third alternative. This is pure eyewash and make-believe, which vanishes into a thin air of empty phrases without a policy as soon as any concrete issue has to be faced and a stand taken. Where is the policy of the mythical "third alternative" on the Dardanelles, on the Rumanian oilfields, on Trieste, on the American air bases, on the atom bomb, on trusteeship? A stand has to be taken one way or another: either with the monopolist interests seeking to dominate the peoples, or with the peoples seeking to build their own planned economy; with the gendarmes or with the peoples struggling for freedom. But Britain holds the key pivotal position in the sense that the decision of the British people, by taking a stand, can determine the balance of world forces, and thereby determine the future, not only for the British people, but for the world.

**America, Europe and Britain**

In the United States the progressive camp, represented by Wallace, Ickes, Pepper and the C.I.O., are conducting a stalwart fight; but it would be optimistic to assume their early victory in face of the mad-bull onset of the most chauvinist sections of American imperialism at the seeming zenith of its power and dreams of world domination. In Europe, on the other hand, the old ruling classes of capitalism are weakened and discredited by association with fascism; the majority of the working-class, having passed through the fire of the fight against fascism and learned the lesson, have turned to Communism, and thus are strong, and powerfully building up the front of the peoples, in face of all the threats and assault of the almighty



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dollar and atom bomb diplomacy. But in Britain the balance is still precarious. The people have rejected Toryism and Churchill; they have reached the stage of voting Labour and have placed Social Democracy in power. Thus Social Democracy, at the moment when it is withering in Europe, reaches its high blossoming in Britain—thereby continuing the typical character of the whole modern period in which the political labour movement in Britain has developed stage by stage a generation after the Continent (and a generation in front of the United States). But Social Democracy is flesh of the flesh and bone of the bone with Toryism in its basic imperialistic outlook. Hence the contradiction of the present situation. Churchill is defeated at the polls. But the policy of Churchill is continued by Bevin. This is the crux of the British political situation.

**Britain's Crisis**

So the revolt grows and extends in the labour movement against the policy of association with Toryism at home and American monopolist reaction abroad. The fight which was opened by the two and a half million trade unionists at Brighton and the hundred Labour M.P.s who abstained on the amendment marks the first major engagement of the battle which will determine Britain's future. It is the first major political alignment responding to the new conditions since the general election. It is the first rallying of the democratic anti-fascist ranks in the new conditions to carry forward the aims for which the people fought in the war and voted in the elections. The controversy is commonly spoken of as a controversy on foreign policy. It is more than that. As day by day experience drives home, in new and sharp and unpleasant forms, the consequences of the American loan conditions (with regard to which reference may now usefully be made to what was written at the time in these Notes last January) and dependence on American reaction, of delayed demobilisation and the shortage of man-power, of exhaustion of economic resources on extravagant overseas commitments, and of weakening of the stand against monopoly at home, the understanding of the true nature of the fight is deepened. In the modern world there can be no separation of home and foreign issues. The fight that is now opening is a fight to save Britain: to end a course which leads to bankruptcy; to end the burdens of an imperialist policy which is strangling recovery; to carry through the home reconstruction which is imperative; it is a fight for the economic and political future of Britain, for the employment and standards of the people, for the lives of men and women and the young generation which is growing up.

**A Warning Memory of 1906**

It is worth recalling today the lesson of 1906-14. In 1906 the people swept Toryism aside, after twenty years of nearly uninterrupted rule, in an electoral landslide which returned a record Liberal majority. The Tory Party was reduced to 157 seats, as against 198 in



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1945. The Liberal Government enjoyed a majority unequalled before or since, of over 350. An imposing programme of social reform was put through amid noisy execration in the Tory press, and the Liberal Government maintained a diminished majority for two more elections. Yet everyone knows today that the real picture behind the scenes during that period was very different from the appearance, and that the main real policy which was put through was the preparation of the war of 1914. At the head of that large amorphous Liberal Party was a small, well-knit ruling group, known as the Liberal Imperialists, consisting of Asquith, Grey, Haldane, Churchill and others, later joined by Lloyd George, who held the key positions and worked closely with the Tories in imperialist, strategic and foreign policy. They took over the Tory foreign policy of Lansdowne, and even amid the din of the elections they were holding the secret staff conversations and entering into the secret commitments which prepared the war of 1914. Questions in Parliament with regard to these commitments were met with evasive answers which concealed the truth, and it has even been claimed by Cabinet Ministers of the period that not all the Cabinet were informed of them. The back benchers were restive; the mass of that Liberal majority were vaguely radical and anti-imperialist in sentiment; they did not like what was going on in Persia or the repression in Egypt and India; they did not enjoy the big naval armaments and detested the alliance with the Tsar. A few courageous and tenacious critics, notably the valiant E. D. Morel, ferreted out the truth; but the newspapers published nothing of what they discovered. The majority were reassured that Morley's reforms were inaugurating a new era in India; and they were, in any case, mainly occupied with the grand programme of social reform at home. So the nation slid into war unawares. Within four years of that electoral landslide the two Front Benches were secretly discussing a Coalition in 1910. By 1915, following the war, the Tories were back in the Government, and continued almost without interruption for thirty years The Liberal Party never recovered.

**The New Cabal**

Today the conditions are very different. The Labour Party, which has replaced the old Liberal Party, is built on the mass organisations of the working-class, even though its leaders seek publicly to deny any class basis or outlook. This is a fundamental difference, politically expressed in the recognition of the aim of socialism. The importance of this difference is already shown in the role the Trades Union Congress is able to play, and the effect of mass pressure in stimulating the revolt of the back benchers. But in the Labour Party also there can be distinguished the vaguely radical anti-imperialist sentiment of the mass of the membership and the small well-knit ruling group, which is deeply imperialist in outlook (Fabian Imperialism—as it used to be called in the old pre-1914 labour movement—replacing Liberal Imperialism) and which holds



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the key positions in the Cabinet and carries forward Tory foreign policy. In this sense the new Cabal of Churchill, Attlee, Bevin and the rest replaces the old Cabal of Balfour, Asquith, Grey, etc. Once again the secret commitments which determine the future are prepared by the staffs; evasive answers are given in parliament; the vigilant critics are treated as trouble-makers (or "crypto-Communists," in the current phrase borrowed from the Tory-fascist technique of propaganda—the familiar technique which consists in branding all Lefts as "dangerous Reds," like the condemnation of poor Laski as a seditious inciter to violence); the back benchers are restive, jib at Spain and Greece, and are suspicious of the line-up with America; but the majority are primarily occupied with the grand social programme at home. Let us make sure that the outcome shall be different this time.

**The End of the Road**

The old basis by which Britain functioned as a world imperialist Power, dominating one-quarter of the globe, intervening and policing in a score of countries, drawing overseas tribute to pay for imports and build up the fortunes of the super-rich class, and neglecting the development of home industry and agriculture—that basis is finished for good and all. The decline of the world capitalist monopoly began already in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. But the new imperialism of Chamberlain and Rhodes, with its promise of dazzling prizes and a social policy for the poor, concealed for a while the decline. The new imperialism spread through all the political parties and penetrated the upper ranks of the labour movement in the shape of Fabianism. There followed the false dawn of 1906-14. The price was paid in the first world war. Britain emerged in deepened decline. The time was ripe for the advance to socialism. But the opportunity was not taken; MacDonald and Thomas dominated the labour movement. There followed the long agony of the chronic depression of the inter-war years. The old imperialist policies were still pursued; Britain maintained hostility to the Soviet Union, built up a strong Germany, built up fascism. The price was paid in the second world war. Britain has emerged still further weakened; the overseas tribute is drying up; there is chronic deficit on the balance of payments; the country is mortgaged to the American millionaires, and the day of foreclosure looms in view. Still the attempt is made to flog the old horse along the ancient ruts; to maintain vast overseas commitments beyond the economic strength and man-power of the country; to pursue the suicidal anti-Soviet and reactionary interventionist policies, while the vital home tasks of basic reconstruction are bogged and delayed. That way lies ruin, worsened standards, a new economic crisis and finally war.

**Facing the Future**

It is time to change the course. It is time to rebuild Britain, to recall our manpower for the tasks at home, to concentrate our economic



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resources on imperative needs of reconstruction and technical development and re-equipment in Britain, and to co-operate in these aims with all the other peoples who are also building their future on a new basis after victory over fascism for real democratic freedom of the common people, planned economy and rising social standards. The days when imperialist reaction could wear the mask of patriotism are past. Today it stands revealed as a policy which seeks to squander the resources and manpower of Britain in order to maintain the wealth and exploitation of the few, and which is ready to make Britain itself a colony of the last Empire of the monopolists in America. Today the experience of every country is more and more clearly demonstrating that it is Communism which most truly voices and fights for the interests of the nation.

**A Last Word**

In his last published work before his death, Keynes, the final heir of capitalist and reformist economic theory and negotiator of the American loan, wrote in the *Economic Journal* of June, 1946:—

> No one can be certain of anything in this age of flux and change. Decaying standards of life at a time when our command over the production of material satisfactions is the greatest ever, and a diminishing scope for individual decision and choice at a time when more than before we should be able to afford these satisfactions, are sufficient to indicate an underlying contradiction in every department of our economy. No plans will work for certain in such an epoch. But if they palpably fail, then, of course, we and everyone else will try something different.

This may well serve as the epitaph of the bourgeois economists and bourgeois wisdom in the age of Imperialism and of the final stages of the crisis of capitalism. Today it is Communism—against which all the apostles of the old order in every country vent their main fire, and even some of those in the ranks of the opposition misguidedly seek to add their mite to the attack—which knows the way forward, the "something different," which alone can face the future, and in co-operation with all sections of the labour movement and the nation will win that future.

R. P. D

*December 7th*, 1946.



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# EUROPE TODAY

by K. Zilliacus, M.P.

TO understand what is happening in post-second-war Europe, it is necessary to look at the situation in the perspective of post-first-war Europe and the years between the wars. Similarities and differences between then and now are equally striking and significant.

"The old institutions on which imperialism and autocracy flourished lie crumbled in the dust; a great wave of advanced democracy is sweeping blindly over Europe," wrote Marshal (then General) Smuts in 1918, in his famous Peace Conference pamphlet. "The whole of Europe is filled with the spirit of revolution," said Mr. Lloyd George in his March, 1919, memorandum to the Big Four, "There is a deep sense not only of discontent, but of anger and revolt amongst the workmen against pre-war conditions. The whole existing order in its political, social and economic aspects is questioned by the masses of the population, from one end of Europe to the other."

All that is true again, with a vengeance, after the second world war. But whereas after the first world war the French Revolution went eastwards, today the Russian Revolution is going westwards. The European Revolutions of 1917-21 were political, although they included land reform in some countries and several abortive attempts at social revolution. Only in Russia was the political revolution engulfed in social revolution.

In the years between the wars the "advanced democracies" that had "swept blindly over Europe" were overthrown one by one and dictatorships established in their place. Some went after the first post-war slump, others after the great slump. Defeat was due to two principal reasons: the world slump and the split in the working-class between Communists and Socialists, which opened a breach through which reaction and fascist counter-revolution passed to power. For this both Communists and Social Democrats were to blame.

The fundamental cause of these events was the breakdown of capitalism in the great slump. The whole of post-war reconstruction had been based on the tacit assumption that the pre-war economic system would revive and work as well as it had before, once the disorganisation and destruction caused by the war had been remedied. The first post-war slump was a sharp warning that went unheeded. In retrospect, most of the "liberal" reconstruction and peace-making in and around Geneva took place in the few years between the first post-war slump and the great slump.

Under the strain of the slumps, the need for social reform merged into the demand for fundamental social change. In revolt against this demand, the dominant sections of the propertied classes deserted the postulates of democracy and fomented political move-



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ments that were, sociologically speaking, forms of capitalist counter-revolution ending in dictatorships. These dictatorships varied from the "classic" forms of fascism in Italy and Germany to the *Sanacja* regime of Marshal Pilsudski and Colonel Beck in Poland and the monarchist-militarist autocracies in the Balkans.

The lesser dictatorships turned more and more to the "fascist Axis" for sympathy and support against their own peoples. Even in the old Western democracies movements sprang up that looked to the fascist powers for inspiration.

During the war Hitler's conquest of Europe was facilitated by the existence of these regimes and of fascist sympathisers among the parties of the Right in wellnigh all European countries. In the hour of defeat most pre-war appeasers of fascism turned into collaborators and quislings. Banking, industry and commerce were all incorporated in Hitler's economic system and administered either by the Germans directly, by their quisling or Vichy-type vassals, or by native business men and bankers who had thrown in their lot with European fascism.

The resistance movements, on the other hand, although they became nation-wide, were primarily based on the working-class and the peasantry and under predominantly Left leadership, in which the Communists, even more than the Socialists, played a leading part. Their reconstruction programmes included not only advanced democratic political constitutions, but also programmes of economic reconstruction that provided for far-reaching state ownership and control of transport, trade, finance and industry.

The defeat and overthrow of fascist and quisling regimes, which were forms of capitalist counter-revolution, inevitably resulted in a measure of social revolution. For the downfall of Hitler's economic system in Europe meant that estates, banks, factories, etc., were left derelict by those who had conducted them during the German occupation and/or the pre-war dictatorships. Most of these business and banking leaders fled with the Germans; most of the minority who stayed behind were arrested as traitors by the triumphant resistance movements, and were lucky if they suffered no worse penalty than confiscation of their property.

In character the new regimes are coalitions of the parties that have issued from the resistance movements, with Communists or Communists and Socialists in conjunction as the strongest and most dynamic factor in the coalitions. The Right wing of the coalitions is generally some form of Catholic, peasant or "Centre" middle-class party, torn between sympathy on its right flank with the discredited and outlawed classes and groups that collaborated with the enemy, and loyalty on its left flank to the reconstruction programme of the resistance movement.

These coalitions have framed and are applying constitutions which strongly resemble those of the first years after the



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first world war, but of an even more advanced democratic character, including not only provisions concerning freedom of speech, association and worship, trial by an independent judiciary, etc., but also clauses stressing the responsibility of the State for conducting industry and trade; the equal citizenship of women, including the right to equal pay for equal work and access to all professions; the obligation to provide full employment, a decent standard of living, free education, free care of the aged and sick and those unable to work. But the main emphasis of the new regimes, driven thereto by stark necessity, by the principle of *primum vivere*, has been social and economic reconstruction on lines involving a good deal of planning and public ownership in trade and industry. The necessity for advancing in this direction is recognised not only by the Communists and Social Democrats, but almost as unreservedly by the more moderate parties co-operating with them.

It cannot be sufficiently stressed that the semi-Socialist programmes of reconstruction are not opposed even by the non-Socialist parties in these coalitions and have very wide popular support, as shown, for instance, in the recent referendum in the Province of Hesse. The American military Commander would not allow the German provincial authorities to incorporate provisions for nationalising key industries in the draft constitution, but insisted on this clause being taken out and submitted to a special referendum. The result was that whereas only 42 per cent. of the electorate had voted Social Democratic and less than 10 per cent. Communist, over 70 per cent. voted in favour of nationalising key industries.

In general, about three-quarters of industrial output is now in the hands of the State and a large sector of the remainder, together with much of the apparatus of finance and trade, is in the hands of the Co-operatives. But there is also a sector for small scale private industry that employs a large number of people. The trades unions and the co-operatives are playing a very great part in running the whole economic machine.

The degree of civil liberty, tolerance of dissent and minority views actually enjoyed within the different countries varies according to how near they had come to democracy in our Western sense before the war, how long they had been under some form of fascist dictatorship, how severely they suffered during the occupation and how deeply their population had been divided between adherents of pre-war fascism or of the Nazi invaders on the one hand and the resistance movement on the other. The amount of material destruction and the acuteness of the resulting economic emergency is another factor.

There is no sign of any desire by the U.S.S.R. to impose the Soviet system or Communist dictatorship on any of these countries. On the contrary, the outlook of Communists in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia (where I was able to check these matters for myself) was emphatically to recognise that they had to



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work out the problems of transition and power in accordance with the needs and traditions of their own countries.

Moreover, as Georgi Dimitrov pointed out in the course of a long talk (I heard a closely similar argument from a former Communist now a member of the Socialist Unity Party in the Soviet Zone of Germany), the situation after the second world war is very different from what it was a quarter of a century ago: according to the Marxist analysis of society, the higher civil service, army and police commands, judges, etc., may in the last resort in a capitalist State remember that they are recruited from the propertied classes and put their class loyalty to the leadership of those classes (i.e., the big business men, bankers, and land owners) before their duty to obey the orders of a Socialist Government elected by the workers and their allies. That is why obtaining a majority in a bourgeois parliament does not necessarily confer the power to change society and why, in Marx's view, and this was further emphasised by Lenin, it was necessary during the period of transition to break the cadres of the capitalist State and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, forming its own civil service and army and setting up its own courts and militia.

But now, said Georgi Dimitrov and the German comrade with whom I talked, the defeat of fascism, which was capitalist counter-revolution, has smashed the fascist and quisling States in a number of countries. Their civil service, army and police commands have disintegrated, their judges have fled. The big land owners, business men and bankers have been dispossessed. The resistance movements have started with a clean slate. They have built up a new civil service, army and police force, made their own law courts and reformed the whole teaching corps. There is no reason at all now, even according to the Marxist analysis, why the business of laying the foundations of a new social order should not proceed by ordinary democratic means—by majority voting, propaganda and persuasion. The capitalist bottlenecks which have hitherto frustrated democracy have been shattered.

I discussed these questions with French Communist leaders several months ago. I am convinced that they were both realistic and sincere when they pointed out that in the conditions of the post-war world democracy was an instrument in the hands of the workers and of the common people for effecting the transition from capitalism to the new social order, and that the fear of democracy and the threat to democracy would come, not from the Left, but from the forces of reaction and counter-revolution, who had been beaten in the war, but had not yet given up hope of staging a come-back. In France, of course, this means General de Gaulle—it is he, and not the Communists, who is the enemy of democracy in post-war France.

Everything I saw confirmed the common sense of *The Times* when it wrote (March 6) attacking Mr. Churchill's call at Fulton for



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an anti-Communist crusade, that to suggest that Communism and Western Democracy are

"irreconcilable opposites dividing or attempting to divide between them the world today" was an assumption of despair and failed to recognise that "there are many forms of government intermediate between Western Democracy and Communism and some of them may be better adapted at the present stage of development to the requirements of Eastern Europe or of the Middle or Far East. . . . While Western Democracy and Communism are in many respects opposed, they have much to learn from each other—Communism in the working of political institutions and in the establishment of individual rights, Western Democracy in the development of economic and social planning."

As to the Soviet attitude, what I saw and heard this summer confirmed what *The Times* Diplomatic Correspondent wrote in three remarkable articles in April, 1945, after a visit to Moscow where he had confidential talks with all the leading men in the Soviet Government. On April 11 he wrote that Soviet leaders believed that Europe was moving towards Socialism, but emphasised Lenin's later teaching that each country must find its own road to that goal without interference from outside. On April 12 he wrote that "Party members insist that they do not want to spread the Soviet system to Europe." But they ask whether it is not

"in the interests of both Britain and the Soviet Union to help in establishing what one or two of them called 'the new democracy'? That would mean a regime somewhere between the Soviet and the capitalist-individualist systems; a regime in each country with firm social security; state control of primary industries; land reform; a government which would exclude the parties of the Right and be based on forces from the Centre to the Left, including Communists."

Under the Atlantic Charter, as interpreted by the Labour Government, we are bound to allow ex-enemy peoples to establish any form of democratic government they choose, but to prevent them from restoring any form of fascism. At Teheran we agreed to help the liberated allied peoples to establish democratic systems of government and to uproot and destroy the remnants of fascism. In the Labour Party's foreign policy statement, which was the basis of our election campaign, called the *International Post-war Settlement*, the view is stressed that Socialism is a fundamental necessity for economic reconstruction, for getting rid of fascism, and for reviving democracy and political freedom in Europe.

If the Labour Party means what it says we must face the fact that there can be no democracy in Europe without Socialist economic reconstruction, and no Socialist reconstruction without the Communists, because of the key part they are playing in the coalition governments and in the trades unions that are actually doing the job.

The Communist Parties of Europe are an integral and important part of the working-class leadership and forces of democracy and progress in Europe. If we are prepared to behave like Socialists in Europe, to will the means as well as the end, and to act on the Labour Party's election pledges in world affairs, we can give a joint



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lead in Europe with the Russians and the French which will be accepted by the U.S.A.

The only possible political conclusion is that we must seek to work out a common policy with France and the Soviet Union for uniting, reconstructing, and reviving Europe. This means supporting Socialism and democracy in Europe on the basis of the Anglo-Soviet and Franco-Soviet Alliances, which call for the partnership of our three countries in the economic reconstruction and political reorganisation of Europe.

Co-operation with France in this policy should aim at forming a West European group as part of an All-European Regional agreement with the U.S.S.R. and France, within the framework of the United Nations and on terms of association negotiated with the U.S.A. and the Dominions. On those lines we should, no doubt, have difficulties, disappointments and reverses, and progress would be slow and arduous. But we should have our feet on solid ground and possess a chart, a compass and a goal. We should stop the present drift to war and begin bit by bit and step by step to win the peace.

# COAL AND THE MINERS

by A. L. Horner

THE Labour Government formed in July, 1945, had immediately to face the problem of a deep crisis in the coal industry, a legacy inherited from private enterprise. To solve this problem, the Cabinet had, in the first place, to rely on the firm loyalty of the mineworkers to the Government which they had done so much to create. Since then the miners have fully justified the faith reposed in them by their Government. In October alone, output was 120,000 tons per week higher than in October, 1945—*with* 3,600 *fewer men in the industry*. Preliminary figures for November, 1946, show a still higher weekly output.

The reason for this remarkable growth of output is the high political consciousness of the miners, who realise that nationalisation is undergoing a test and also know how much the Government relies upon them in the present economic difficulties of the post-war period. Therefore the men engaged in the ardous task of winning coal from the bowels of the earth have given of their best to assist the Government.

This rise in coal output has been a continuous process ever since the General Election: and, moreover, it has been achieved with a falling labour force, with less and less men. A year ago there were 696,200 on the colliery books: by October, 1946, there were 692,600: and there are still less in November. Yet output had gone up, from an average weekly tonnage of 3,567,400 in October, 1945, to 3,687,000 in October, 1946; from an output per man shift of 1.02 tons to 1.05



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tons. In the present coal year (which runs from May 1, 1946, to April 30, 1947) the miners, with fewer men to do it, have in the first six months produced five million tons more than in the corresponding period of 1945. The accompanying diagrams show this double process in graphic detail.

This achievement can only be explained in political terms. The miners, through their trade union, have always played an important part in the labour movement. Since the General Election victory, the National Union of Mineworkers has undertaken a task that is unique. For the first time in the history of the trade union movement in this country, the miners' trade union assumed the responsibility of actively assisting in the efforts to increase coal output. For example, last winter the union appointed a national production officer and in the districts eight production officers whose salaries were paid out of the funds of the national union. A national production campaign was launched, posters and leaflets prepared and meetings organised to explain to the miners the need for doing everything possible to increase output, to assist industry generally and to help the Government carry out its plans to reconvert industry to peacetime uses. The National Union of Mineworkers spent approximately £20,000 in this campaign, which gives it the distinction of being the only trade union in this country ever to have utilised its funds to advance production.

The result was that during last winter the miners produced in six months two million tons above the pre-election estimate of the Ministry of Fuel and Power. The union had succeeded. The tide was turned. In spite, however, of all the efforts of the miners, the coal position is still acute. Consumption is rising, so that if difficulties are to be avoided this winter, care must be exercised in every industry in the use of coal, and in using it efficiently. It is everybody's responsibility, and one that cannot rest exclusively on the shoulders of the miners.

The miners have done this magnificent job for the country. They have done this job also because they need to prepare the way for radical improvements in their conditions, which they believe are urgently necessary if the industry is to survive. For the miners are convinced that the full implementation of the Miners' Charter is a basic necessity if the young people are to be attracted to coal mining as a career. Next year the school-leaving age will be raised to fifteen years of age, and later to sixteen years.

Conditions in the coal industry must be radically changed if it is to attract those who have enjoyed a better education than their fathers.

The five-day week is the most urgent reform if young people are to come into the industry. It must be recognised by every single person in these islands that the miners intend to get the five-day week. At the moment, under the Control of Engagement Order, the



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miners are tied to the industry but they will not accept indefinitely the position of being among the few remaining groups of workers who are tied to an industry. The Control of Engagement Order will have to be removed. When that happens the men will only stay in the industry, and new people will only come in to the coal industry, if the conditions are sufficiently attractive. That is why we say we cannot allow mineworkers to be tied to the industry while other basic industries are enjoying the five-day week. If any worker in this country should enjoy the five-day week it is the miner, who has one of the most difficult and arduous jobs in Britain.*

After a very careful examination of the existing conditions in the industry, we are convinced that the introduction of the five-day week will not result in loss of output. On the contrary, in a very short space of time it will lead to an actual increase in coal output. The Union claims that this item in the Miners' Charter cannot any longer be delayed. The need to maintain and increase manpower demands this reform.

In addition to the five-day week, the miners will also expect the introduction at an early date of a pension or superannuation scheme. The industry must offer security too to the rising generation of miners. When they take up mining as a career they must be certain when they retire after thirty or forty years in the pits they will be free from economic worries. Furthermore, as indicated in the Miners' Charter, there must be provision for compulsory medical examination for all miners who have to leave the industry for health reasons, and training for them at full wages until they are employed in another industry on skilled work.

Yes, the miners have played their part and are still doing so. The reforms outlined in the Miners' Charter are the result of a very careful examination of the industry's basic problems, and they offer the only certain solution. We can, and will, create a healthy and revitalised coalmining industry, but we must warn the nation that this can only be done if the proper measures are taken—and speedily. Delay will mean disaster, will bring economic consequences which cannot, and must not, be contemplated.

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*Readers of newspaper attacks on "absentee" miners should note the following evidence:—

*Absenteeism.*

"Yes, sir, it does include sickness. I think, if I may offer a personal observation, that this absenteeism percentage as calculated, and as applied in respect of the coal mining industry, is extraordinarily unfair to the industry, because it includes all the people who are away sick or injured, for any reason whatsoever. I do not think it is a type of calculation which is made or published in respect of any other industry, and I think in that sense it is a misleading one."—*Evidence of Mr. A. F. Hemming, Principal Assistant Secretary to the Ministry of Fuel and Power, before the Railway Charges Consultative Committee, October 7th*, 1946.



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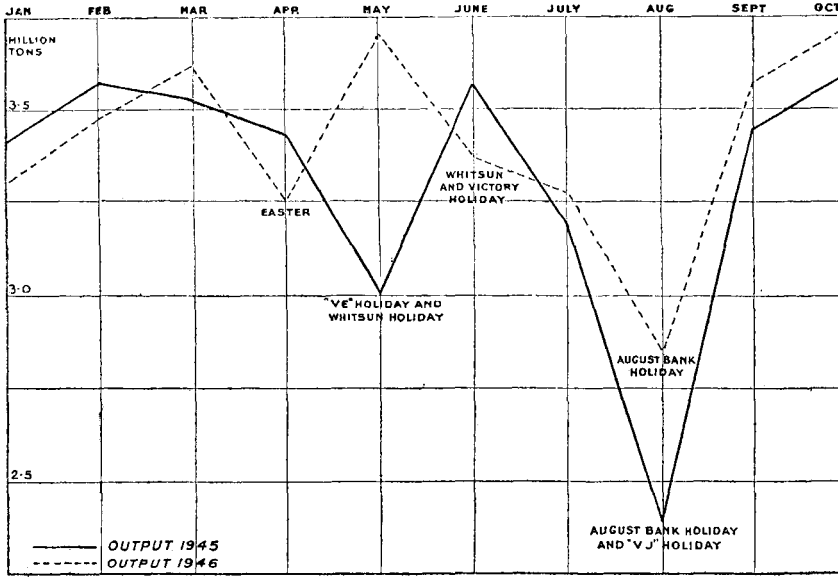
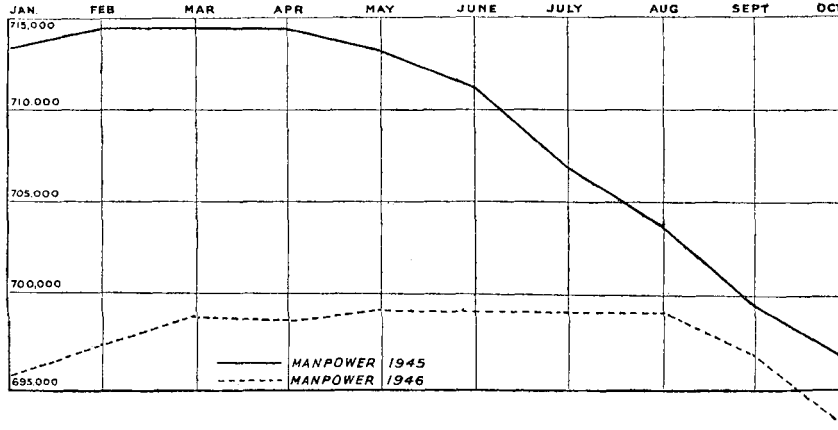
## OUTPUT OF SALEABLE MINED COAL 1945-46

MONTHLY AVERAGES




## MANPOWER 1945-46

MONTHLY AVERAGES



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# TRUSTEESHIP AND THE COLONIAL QUESTION

by Leonard Barnes

IN 1919 one of the headaches of the peacemakers was settling what to do with the colonial areas formerly controlled by Germany and Turkey. The mandate system was invented as an attempt to solve this problem.

Today's problem, under discussion at the General Assembly of the United Nations during December, is more complex. We have to find some adequate way of dealing not merely with ex-enemy dependencies, but also with colonial empires as a whole, and in the first place with the mandated territories, whose position has been uncomfortably ambiguous ever since the League of Nations died intestate. The trusteeship system of UNO expresses the current international effort to come to grips with these wider issues. The formal skeleton of the new system is given in Chapters 11-13 of the San Francisco Charter. Some flesh will be put on the bones by trusteeship agreements—one for each territory that comes into the scheme.

Looking back over the twenty years of the mandate system's life, no one would now claim that it altered the shape of the colonial problem at large, or represented any significant departure from the old imperialism. The four main features of a typical mandate may be summed up as (*a*) *native welfare*, conceived negatively as a series of bans on religious persecution and the trade in slaves, armaments, liquor and drugs; (*b*) *no militarisation*, except for local defence; (*c*) *no discrimination* in respect of commerce or investment or immigration against any League member; and (*d*) *a measure of international supervision*, by which the mandatory power rendered an annual report to the League Council and was examined on it by the Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva. Applying these four points to a few scattered areas in the Middle East, tropical Africa, and the western Pacific was virtually all the mandate system amounted to.

II

From the first days of Lend-Lease and the Atlantic Charter, a main anxiety of President Roosevelt was to satisfy the American public that American war-aid to Britain was not equivalent to American underwriting of the British colonial system. As early as their meeting in Newfoundland in August, 1941, Roosevelt was at pains to disabuse Churchill's mind of any idea that he could count on the U.S.A. as a kind of "good-time Charlie" to pull chestnuts out of the fire for Tory imperialism. With a view to giving practical effect to this attitude, Roosevelt began to work out a scheme for extending UNO trusteeship to *all* colonial territories so as to bring independence in accordance with agreed time-schedules to their inhabitants.



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In London *The Times* poured scorn on the whole Roosevelt conception as covering "any colonial territory anywhere" and seeking "the Kingdom of Heaven or nothing." (April 23,1945.) As soon as death took Roosevelt off, the U.S. Navy Department and Lord Halifax between them had no difficulty in tearing up his draft. But it is worth remembering that, were Roosevelt alive today, all dependent empires would probably by now have been brought within the purview of UNO.

It is even better worth remembering on what grounds Roosevelt attached such cardinal importance to finding an international solution of the colonial problem. He was vividly aware of the social misery of most colonial areas; and as he viewed its impotent victims with compassion, so he viewed its exploiting authors with disgust. Such responses are rare, though not perhaps unprecedented, in capitalist statesmen. What gave Roosevelt his unique place among his colleagues and rivals in all capitalist countries was his perception that imperialism destroys the prospect of world peace. *The colonial system means war*. That was his watchword; and he proposed not merely to proclaim it, but to act on it. He was determined to cast UNO's net wide enough to catch *all* the dependent empires of the world, precisely because colonial exploitation and repression would otherwise "negate the value of any organised structure for peace before it begins." To him a collective security system which evaded the colonial issue was cutting its own throat.

Of course he had his blind spots. He may have known the name of Lenin, but certainly did not connect it with any scientific study of this very problem. Though he could sense a connection between empire and war, and one between peace and colonial liberation, he had no clear grasp of what the causal links actually were. It never occurred to him to blame the profit motive—the fact that, since an industrial economy cannot be continuously operated at a profit within a closed system, profit-based economies are always compelled to break the bounds of closed systems and to seek expansion beyond them, even at one another's expense. Hence it never seems to have occurred to him, either, that the U.S.A. could be classified as an imperialist country. This inattention to the beam in his own eye no doubt helped him to spot the mote in Churchill's. But the surprising thing is not that his insight should have lacked precision at some points, but that it should have penetrated as deep as it did at any.

## III

Roosevelt's scheme, much to the satisfaction of *The Times* and other similar quarters, was torpedoed before the San Francisco Conference met. Of the attenuated substitute produced by the U.S. Navy Department the *Christian Science Monitor* observed at the time: "It contains nothing to which the most ardent nationalist could object. Trusteeship, as written into the Charter, is to be an ideal rather than a fact." The task of transforming this American dummy into some-



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thing substantial and alive has since been left to the Soviet delegations at the various UNO meetings, with unfailing obstruction from many other delegates and intermittent assistance from some few. Among the latter may be mentioned the Chinese, the New Zealand and the Egyptian.

Are we, then, to write off the trusteeship provisions of the U.N. Charter as meaningless, or at any rate as having no more meaning in today's world than the League mandates had in yesterday's? I think not. To do so would be to ignore two vital facts. First, that Soviet pressure has even in these early days managed to secure several improvements on the original San Francisco plan. And second, that the character and consequences of World War II differ profoundly from those of World War I. Today Communism is in every part of the world an indestructible force.

At the centre, Communism is powerfully represented on the Trusteeship Council now coming into existence in New York. At the circumference it is making a perceptible, if localised, impact on the colonial masses themselves. And in between there hums the movement's complex multi-national network, spread over many organisational levels, much of which can be used to maintain fruitful contact between circumference and centre.

## IV

The most important success so far scored by Soviet pressure holds out a prospect that the international supervision of trustee administrations may eventually become a reality. Not only can representatives of the Trusteeship Council carry out visits of inspection to trust territories to see things for themselves, but also the inhabitants of trust territories can make direct touch with the Council through their own democratically chosen spokesmen. Neither possibility existed under the mandate system, and both constitute a real and practical advance. Four other significant improvements may be listed:—

(1) The United Nations draw a clear distinction between their strategic and their humanitarian interest in dependent territories. The League slurred over this distinction in a very disingenuous way. In the UN scheme trust territories are placed directly under the charge of the Security Council if their primary importance is held to be strategic. The Trusteeship Council's responsibility is confined to those regions where there is a real chance of giving local social progress priority over the requirements of military security. The new approach can at least claim the merits of candour and realism.

(2) In harmony with the above distinction, the "no militarisation" clauses of the mandates have been thrown over. Administering authorities are now called on to incorporate every trust territory into the general organisation of international security. In this way the inhabitants of trust territories will play a part both in the arrangements for their own military defence and in the wider measures taken by UN to prevent war. Acknowledgment is given alike to the indivisibility of peace and to the candidature of trust territories for early admission to the circle of responsible and self-governing communities.

(3) Similarly, the "Open Door" provisions of the mandates, which guaranteed equality of economic treatment in mandated areas to all League members,



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are not indeed abrogated, but are made subject to an over-riding concern for the economic interests of the inhabitants of trust territories. In other words, a formal attempt is made to set up a "native paramountcy" in matters of trade, industry and investment. When native economic systems try to modernise themselves and reach a better balance at higher levels of productivity, their efforts will not now be thwarted, as they could be under the mandates, by an externally imposed ban on protective tariffs and other methods of fostering local enterprise The administrations of trust territories are empowered to discriminate even against members of the United Nations, if such discrimination will, in their view, favour the economic advancement of their wards.

(4) Finally, these outline possibilities of a more promising approach to colonial issues have to be seen in the context of the scheme for international economic co-operation arising out of the Bretton Woods Agreements. Colonial peoples in general stand to gain in two ways, if this scheme is in practice operated with an impartial eye to raising the international income (and not merely as a device for blowing up all obstacles to the privileged entry of U.S. exports into all markets).

The first way is that the International Monetary Fund can, in certain conditions, aid colonial countries by favouring the abandonment of restrictive policies in relation to world trade, and thus evoking an expanding demand for colonial products. The second way is that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development has as one of its major purposes, according to official pronouncements of the U.S. Treasury and the State Department, the development of the productive resources of the less developed countries, and will regard colonial areas requiring long-term loans at low rates of interest for sound economic development as strong candidates for the aid the Bank can give.

V

There is no need to be naive about such programmes. At present they are mere scraps of paper; and when, if ever, they are carried into action, they will be open to every conceivable type of capitalist abuse. The proof of them all is in the eating; and any colonial country that proposes to sup with the American sponsors of Bretton Woods will clearly be well advised to take with it a whole golf-bag of long spoons. The new set-up assuredly does not offer fool-proof automatic machinery for solving the colonial question. There is, and can be, no such machinery.

But to be cynical is worse than to be naive. The sober fact is that the UN trusteeship arrangements, when viewed in their full context, comprise an international instrument which is quite capable in willing hands of being put to constructive use. The business of the British Labour movement is to see that it is in very deed used to launch a positive effort by the Powers to end colonial dependence throughout the world. A combination of Britain, the U.S.S.R., China and India, directed to this objective, is one which a British Labour Government is well placed for organising, and one which even a Republican U.S. Government would be hard put to it to resist.

VI

There are several categories of dependency which, subject always to the consent of their inhabitants, have to be brought within the scope of the Trusteeship Council, e.g.:—

The B Mandates of the League.

The C Mandates of the League.



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Ex-enemy colonies of World War II (i.e., Japanese and Italian).

Colonies of non-belligerents (i.e., Spanish and Portuguese).

Colonies of countries inside UN (i.e., British, French, Dutch and Belgian).

Any other territories desiring to assume trust status.

At the moment very few of these are firm prospects for the trusteeship fold. What is called for here is a scheme of priorities designed to bring these several groups under the UN umbrella in orderly fashion. At the same time, machinery and personnel for the proper supervision of each group need to be assembled and formed into effective teams.

In the next place it has to be established that to come under the trusteeship umbrella and assume trust status is identical with accepting what may be called associate membership of the United Nations. Associate membership should lead to full membership by a short series of visible steps. Each trusteeship agreement should give dated targets corresponding to the various stages of advance to self-government for the given territory. These dates will vary with varying local conditions, but no target should be more remote than fifteen years from the coming into force of the agreement.

At the end of that period all trust territories should have achieved, either in their own sole right or as equal members of a federation, that status of sovereign equality which would entitle them to full membership of the United Nations. The whole trusteeship scheme would then be self-liquidating within a foreseeable time*.

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* A danger to be guarded against here is that of bogus and over-accelerated "grants" of independence.

Plenty of unscrupulous statesmen have made the discovery that they can acquire credit for liberalism, can maintain imperial domination unimpaired, and can escape the annoyances of international supervision all at the same time, by the simple step of proclaiming a purely nominal "independence" for some area under their control.

Shadowy traces of such procedure may, perhaps, be perceived in British dealings with India and in American dealings with the Philippines. These instances apart, the present British Foreign Secretary has already played the spurious independence card twice. Once (successfully) in respect of Transjordan, a League mandate, which he wished to turn into an anti-Soviet military base without having UN snoopers fussing around to see what he was up to; and once (unsuccessfully) in respect of ex-Italian North Africa—territory which again he wanted to keep under exclusive British control, so that he might use it, in case of need, to stop the Russians from "cutting across the throat" of his Empire.

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Due to the Christmas holidays the magazine has to go to press very early in December. The Guarantee Fund for December and January will appear in the February issue.



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# THE GENERAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

*(Features of the Home and Foreign Policy of the Capitalist Countries during the Epoch of the General Crisis of Capitalism)*

by E. Varga

THE home and foreign policy of the capitalist countries during the period of the general crisis of capitalism exhibits certain specific features which distinguish it from the policy of capitalism prior to this period. Stalin, in his speech of February 9, 1946, pointed out: "Marxists have more than once declared that the capitalist system of world economy conceals within itself elements of general crisis and war conflicts. . . ." In point of fact, during the periods when capitalism was still developing along an ascending line, Marx founded the theory of the inevitable collapse of capitalism, showing that capitalism is a social order that is historically transitory and far from the final form of the organisation of human society, as all bourgeois economists and politicians at that time maintained.

Historical experience demonstrates that the transition from one social order to another everywhere in the world demands a fairly prolonged period of time. This period can be called that of the general crisis of the particular social order in question. Lenin, as is well known, called imperialism—capitalism in decay; it is quite obvious that to say that a social order is in decay is the same thing as saying that it is in a state of crisis.

In order to characterise the foreign and home policy of the capitalist countries during the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism, it is necessary, first of all, to make clear when this crisis began. It would, of course, be incorrect to designate any particular year, month or day as that when the general crisis of capitalism began. But on the basis of what Lenin has said of imperialism as capitalism in decay, the conclusion can be drawn that the general crisis of capitalism began when the transition from free capitalism to monopolistic capitalism was completed in the most important countries of the capitalist world, i.e., approximately at the beginning of the twentieth century.

As has been pointed out in the *Short History of the C.P.S.U. (b)*, the first world war was already a reflection of the general crisis of capitalism. Although, however, the general crisis of capitalism existed already before the first world war, the existence of this crisis was not then a political factor such as could exercise a decisive influence on the foreign and home policy of the capitalist countries. Marxism teaches that with an alteration of the economic basis there is an alteration also of the political superstructure of society, of ideology,



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of the consciousness of the masses. But this process of change of the economic basis and of the political superstructure does not proceed simultaneously. The general phenomenon to which Marx, Lenin and Stalin pointed is the lag in the change of the political superstructure in relation to the change of economy. This, indeed, is understandable. Persons who experience the changes taking place in the economic basis do not immediately draw the corresponding political conclusions. The bourgeois revolutions constitute a forcible explosion, an adaptation of the political superstructure to an economic basis that has already long before undergone alteration.

As a matter of fact, prior to the first world war, apart from Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Russia, no one in the capitalist world saw the existence of the crisis of capitalism, or that the replacement of the capitalist system by a socialist system was a task that had become historically mature.

Besides the general tendency for political consciousness to lag behind the change in the economic basis, there existed also concrete historical causes why the fact of the existence of the general crisis of capitalism had still not penetrated into the consciousness of people. The half century which preceded the first world war was a period of the greatest progress of capitalism. In this half century capitalist production increased approximately four-fold; it was a period of great technical progress, a period when the capitalist countries took possession of numerous colonies and thereby extended the capitalist market. The bourgeoisie utilised colonial super-profits to buy the labour aristocracy. During this period reformism struck deep roots in the labour movement. It should also be remembered that during this half century there were no wars between the Great Powers. The last war between Great Powers was the Franco-Prussian War; after it only a number of local and colonial wars took place.

The participants in the first world war were bourgeois countries of the same kind. There was, of course, a difference between Great Britain, France and America—countries in which the bourgeois revolution had been completed—and Germany, which still possessed strong relics of feudalism, and Tsarist Russia; but basically these were bourgeois countries of the same kind, the peoples of which were convinced that whatever the outcome of the war, all the countries participating in it would nevertheless remain bourgeois countries.

This "conception" was shattered by the October Revolution in Russia. It came with great unexpectedness for the bourgeoisie throughout the world (including the Russian bourgeoisie) and for the working-class outside Russia. The victory of the October Revolution at one stroke demonstrated to the whole world the existence of the general crisis of the capitalist system, which found its political reflection in the fact that the socialist country made its appearance alongside the capitalist countries. From that moment concern for the preservation of the capitalist system became the chief content of both



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the home and foreign policy of the bourgeoisie. The danger for capitalism was most real in the conquered countries, where the bourgeoisie that had lost the war was discredited and the governmental authority shattered, while the defeated army did not form a reliable bulwark of bourgeois rule. The bourgeois capitalist world was faced with a problem: how to preserve the capitalist system.

The bourgeoisie attempted to solve this problem, first and foremost by making an alliance with the reformist labour leaders. The chief method used by the bourgeoisie was the isolation of the still young Communist parties from the basic masses of the workers. With this aim in view the bourgeoisie made a number of political concessions to the working-class: the bourgeoisie agreed to satisfy those demands of the working-class which were compatible with the preservation of bourgeois power. At the same time the basic factors of bourgeois power—private ownership of the means of production and governmental power—remained untouched. The bourgeoisie succeeded in isolating the Communist parties. Simultaneously it combined its political manoeuvres with the employment of the most savage terror, destroying part of the most revolutionary-inclined workers and left leaders of the working-class.

This policy can be most vividly traced in the history of Germany after the first world war. Parallel with it a struggle was conducted against the Soviet Union. This fight was waged by various means—ranging from various forms of ideological struggle to direct intervention, which, as is well known, proved unsuccessful.

Of course, the struggle against the Soviet Union does not exhaust the content of the foreign policy during that period; there continued to exist very acute internal imperialist contradictions. The chief of these in Europe were the contradictions between Great Britain and France. Britain did not want France to become the strongest power on the Continent and therefore supported Germany against France. The chief contradictions on a world scale were those between Britain and the U.S.A.

In the period between the two world wars, the general crisis of capitalism was considerably deepened. This was reflected in the very profound and prolonged economic crisis of 1929-1933. This crisis was succeeded by a depression of a special type, characterised by its unemployment on a huge scale. The economic features of the general crisis became very clear and tangible for the working masses in capitalist countries. A political consequence of this was that reformism found it more and more difficult to fulfil its role as the bulwark of the bourgeoisie. In some countries, reformism proved to be incapable of fulfilling this role. In Germany, for the Communist party won a majority of the workers in the industrial centres—in Berlin and the Ruhr area. Under conditions the German, Italian and Hungarian bourgeoisie was to look for a new party, a new lever, for holding the work-



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ing-class under its influence. Such a means was found in fascism, the fascist movement and the fascist party. Fascism is a political product of the general crisis of capitalism, and, as Stalin has pointed out, the passing to fascism indicates not only the strength, but the weakness of the bourgeoisie. Especially characteristic of the fascist movement in connection with the general crisis of capitalism is the fact that, as a rule, the fascists did not come forward as open defenders of capitalism, they did not say that they were backing capitalism, and that the capitalist order was the most perfect social order. On the contrary, they came forward everywhere with anti-capitalist demagogy, because, to come out with an open defence of capitalism in the conquered countries of Europe would have prevented them from acquiring influence among the toilers.

This circumstance confused, for a time, even some of the leading elements of the working-class. The theory that fascism is the power of the petty-bourgeoisie, the power of declassed elements, that it is Buonapartism, a power above classes, etc., acquired a certain popularity. All these views, of course, were completely devoid of reality. We know now that Italian, German and Hungarian fascism was financed by monopoly capitalists in these countries.

Fascism, of course, has its specific features in the different countries, for it is everywhere connected with the old reactionary forces of the given country, but basically fascism is the political expression of the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism. Fascism was victorious and came to power first and foremost in those countries which were conquered in the first world war or which were virtually in the position of conquered countries as, for example, Italy, despite the fact that she belonged to the camp of the victors. In those countries where the bourgeoisie achieved a new, forcible re-division of the world, the bourgeoisie helped the fascist forces because the fascists were not only anti-Marxists, but also chauvinists who undertake the task of defending the capitalist social order and preparing the people for a new war. It should not be forgotten that after the first world war, the majority of the people in all the conquered countries did not want a new war; social-democracy was pacifically inclined, which also lowered its value for the aggressive bourgeoisie of these countries.

This article does not aim at giving an analysis of the causes of the second world war. We shall limit ourselves merely to pointing out that the second world war, unlike the first, did not begin between countries of the same kind. On one side were the fascist aggressors, on the other—the democratic countries; moreover, in the camp of the latter were both the highly developed capitalist countries and the Soviet Union. It is obvious that this circumstance was bound to exert a strong influence on the entire home and foreign policy of the capitalist countries.



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The fact that the Soviet Union and the highly-developed capitalist countries were in the same camp of powers fighting against the fascist aggressors meant that the struggle between the two systems in the democratic camp was temporarily mitigated, suspended; but this, of course, did not signify the end of the struggle. At the same time, the struggle between the two systems assumed its most acute form when the fascist aggressors attacked the Soviet Union. The Allies assisted the Soviet Union, but it cannot be said that, in so doing, they forgot about the difference in social systems. The secrecy about the atom bomb is sufficient as an example of this. In the sphere of domestic policies, the Communist parties of the countries of the democratic camp—Great Britain, America, etc.—on the basis of the just nature of the war, helped their governments in the war against the fascists, urged them towards the opening of the Second Front, despite the efforts of reactionary circles in the Allied countries. They defended their people from the danger of German fascism.

It goes without saying that the Anglo-American contradictions —the decisive inter-imperialist contradictions—were also relegated to the background during the war, while the contradictions between the democratic countries and the fascist aggressors came into the foreground; but the Anglo-American contradictions did not disappear and the struggle between America and Britain continued even during the war years. Thus, during the war the Americans took good care that the commodities exported from England should not include more than 10 per cent. of the materials which England received by lease-lend. During the war American capital endeavoured, not without success, to squeeze out British capital from its positions in Latin-America, and to obtain markets in India and the British Dominions. The Americans put on the black list of firms with which trade was forbidden, not only purely Argentine enterprises, but also those which had British capital. In the Near East, the struggle for oil continued also during the war.

When the second world war came to an end, the struggle for the preservation of the capitalist system once more became the chief problem in the domestic policy of the capitalist countries, just as it had been after the first world war. The bourgeoisie is scared by the general swing to the left in the working-class movement throughout the world after the end of the war. The forms taken by this swing to the left, and its degree, differ in the different countries. If we take such first-ranking capitalist countries as the U.S.A. and Great Britain, it will be found that the swing to the left there was expressed above all in a strengthening of the reformist labour movement. As is known, the Labour Party in Britain won a victory in the Parliamentary elections. In the U.S.A. mass strikes are taking place and the trade union movement has grown stronger. In these countries, although a strengthening of the Communist parties has taken place, they are not yet an important factor in the domestic policy of these



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countries. The capitalist system in these countries has not been shaken in consequence of the war. This is understandable. In the countries which were victorious in the war, the bourgeoisie was not discredited, the State apparatus remained as before, while the army was even strengthened as compared with the pre-war period. One of the characteristic features of post-war policy is the strengthening of militarism in the Anglo-Saxon countries and especially in the U.S.A., which has become the most powerful military State of the capitalist world.

The situation is quite different in the countries of continental Europe. In these countries the bourgeoisie is discredited. In the life of one single generation, the population of the European countries has experienced two big wars. Now it is forced to starve and, moreover, it is, of course, the industrial workers, the intelligentsia and the urban population who are starving first and foremost, and not the bourgeoisie or the well-to-do peasantry. Under such circumstances, radicalisation, a swing leftward of the working masses and toilers in general, is inevitable. To this must be added, also, another factor, namely, the strong polarisation of capitalist society during the war. Millions of people from the middle strata—artisans, traders, middle bourgeoisie—lost their independence during the war and became workers. Inflation during and after the war reduces to nothing the savings of the middle strata. The tendency towards the polarisation of modern society, to the formation of two camps—the big bourgeoisie and its immediate environment on the one hand, and workers, office employees, intelligentsia, who do not own property, on the other—is extremely strong. This tendency found expression in the defeat of the typical parties of the middle bourgeoisie of town and village as, for example, the Radical-Socialist Party in France or the Liberal Party in Britain.

The bourgeoisie of the countries which were subjected to German occupation became particularly discredited, because, in the main, the big bourgeoisie of France, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary collaborated with the fascist invaders. True, there were isolated exceptions: there were some capitalists in each country who took part in the resistance movement. In the main, however, the bourgeoisie collaborated with the occupationists and this, side by side with the military defeat, was the chief factor in its discrediting.

In addition, however, a number of new, important political factors distinguish the present situation from that after the first world war. *One of these new factors is the changed role of the Communist parties of Europe.*

(*Continued in next Issue*).



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# *Book Reviews*

## Dobb as Historian

*Studies in the Development of Capitalism* by Maurice Dobb (George Routledge & Sons, price 18*s*).

MAURICE DOBB has demonstrated in a most striking way the superiority of the Marxist approach to historical problems over the bourgeois eclecticism which nowadays passes as a substitute for proper analysis. Hitherto he has been known primarily as a Marxist critic of contemporary capitalist economy. In this book he reveals himself as a historian. With a wealth of detail drawn both from primary and secondary sources, he has analysed the amazing intricacies and contradictions at the root of capitalist development from the end of the middle ages until the present day. Not only at succeeding stages in the development of capitalism has he shown the effects of changes of technique on relations of production, but he has also indicated the political consequences of these changes. And, giving the lie to those critics who equate Marxism with a mechanical determinism, he shows the counteraction of class and ideology on the development of economic practices.

The main points of concentration in the book are on the new factors growing up in a decaying feudal economy which were to smash feudal social relationships; the striking contradictions in early capitalist society between those capitalists whose profit was gained by commercial manipulation and those whose profit was gained from capitalist production as such; the techniques and relations of production during the industrial revolution; and the growth of monopoly and economic crisis in the era of imperialism.

On the decline of feudalism, a subject still wrapt in obscurity—partly because of the small amount of research done on it, but even more so because hitherto the majority of economic historians have not analysed what evidence there is from the correct standpoint—Dobb shows how the problem must be approached from the point of view of the most fundamental of social relationships, namely, the relationship between exploiters and exploited. Having thus defined the essence of feudal economy, he makes a penetrating and many-sided examination of the problems involved in the decline of that economy. The crisis of labour supply, the alternative solutions presenting themselves to the increasingly bankrupt feudal ruling class, the growth of a rural "kulak" class, are all discussed, not only from a full knowledge of the latest work on the subject by English historians, but with the illumination of European and especially Russian parallels.

While the growth of small scale urban industry, of local and eventually international trade is shown in considerable detail as contributing to the dissolution of feudalism and to the beginnings of a capitalist economy and a capitalist class, Dobb warns against the pre-dating of true capitalism. Merchant capital, concerned only in profit derived from adventitious price differences or from usury, is by no means incompatible with feudalism. The early merchant fortunes made in this way were not, in fact, the beginnings of the primitive accumulation of capital. In the 14th century the superprofits of moneylenders and war-contractors either vanished like snow in the sunshine in unproductive expenditure, or went to establish their owners in the ranks of the feudal ruling class—the de la Poles of Hull being the classic example.

On the primitive accumulation of capital, Dobb shows its operation in two phases. During the first phase, the bourgeoisie acquires cheap assets, which it realises in a later phase by sale at high prices, investing the proceeds in cheap capital goods and badly paid proletarian labour, the prerequisites of industrialisation. The principal asset thus acquired was land, the source of the economic and political power of the feudal aristocracy: the bourgeoisie made on the deal not only in the economic, but also in the political bankruptcy of its class enemy.

In the seventeenth century developments, mercantile monopoly, interested only in the "terms of trade," is shown to be identified with political



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reaction, and the industrial bourgeoisie with the progressive elements during and after the English Revolution. But the real victory of industrial capitalism does not occur until the end of the eighteenth century as a result of the coincidence of a number of necessary factors —a coincidence never since repeated, nor (as is convincingly demonstrated) ever likely to be repeated.

There are treasures of analysis in this remarkable book. If the case for a historical and Marxist outlook as the "essential foundation for any realistic system of economics" (the original aim of these studies), is proved up to the hilt, the work has also proved that a Marxist approach is the only possible one for the solution to historical problems. It is to be hoped that both historians and economists learn the appropriate lesson.

RODNEY HILTON.

## Bluff and Bluster

*Bevin* by Trevor Evans. Allen & Unwin, 10*s*6*d*).

I FOUND THIS book very readable and interesting. Knowing both the writer and the subject of his book, I was curious to see what kind of picture Mr. Evans would reveal. It perhaps was more intended to present Mr. Bevin to the American public than our own, but, in any case, it contains a great deal of very informative and valuable information about a person, who has made his impression on the labour movement of Britain. You get a good picture of the rise and development of Bevin, against the familiar background of all trade union leaders of his age, of poverty and insecurity, of fighting against great odds, and in Bevin's case, without any attempt of seeking the willing co-operation of others who could have made the fight easier and more successful.

The book brings out very strongly the price working-class leaders must pay if they neglect the study of Marxist philosophy as a whole. It explains the role of Social Democracy, and the serious mistakes the movement has to pay on this account. But in Bevin's case, this neglect is coupled with a sense of contempt, and the complete inability to realise that one man bands inevitably break down. You get the feeling very strongly that no one at any time or in any place had anything to "teach Me, Bevin." Behind this facade of the Great Man theory, you get the attempt to cover up political weaknesses and blindness by bluff and bluster. It deceives no one in the long run, only those who practise it.

It also explains why, in critical situations, or where special thought and knowledge in the presentation of a policy is necessary, such types believe that silence is golden. Mr. Bevin was forced at the Paris Conference to operate this self-imposed silence, because he could not answer the arguments made by those speakers who formulated their case on their knowledge of Marxism. When Mr. Bevin had his biggest chance, he was the biggest failure, and Britain was leaderless at a Conference which could have made its name renowned throughout the ages for its Socialist approach to the grave problems which had to be decided. Bevin, as this book clearly shows, is one of those Labour leaders who believe it to be more important to prove they can make capitalism work more efficiently than the capitalists, and, who, in the long run, become the simple tools of the most aggressive sections of monopoly capitalism—as Bevin now proves by his willing servitude to American big business.

Mr. Evans' write-up of Mr. Bevin inevitably creates the picture of a lonely leader, who never possessed that supreme quality of leadership—the ability to win the willing collective work of those around him so that the great Cause of Socialism could the sooner be established.

HARRY POLLITT.

## A Jubilee History

*The Story of the Engineers* by James B. Jeffreys (Lawrence and Wishart, price 10*s*6*d*, 301 pp.).

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL of the Amalgamated Engineering Union are to be congratulated on their decision to mark the Jubilee of their Union with a play, a film and a history. Each of these has added to the cultural



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development of the working-class at a period when the lessons of the past are essential to clear political thinking of the future.

All history has been a history of class struggles, of struggle between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social evolution. And the *Story of the Engineers* is no exception. It is a methodical account of the class struggle of the engineering workers throughout the past century and a half. Unfortunately, it can be placed in the category of "official" histories, and as a consequence many of the old boys will be more than a little disappointed at the lack of intimate episodes so near to their hearts and extending all over the country. This is a great pity, because very soon these old boys will pass away and the opportunity to record such inner stories of events will have been irretrievably lost.

Even so, this methodical survey of the engineering workers and their class struggles is a story of tremendous battles heroically fought and never lost. No class battle is ever lost. There are set-backs, but such set-backs are only stages in the development of the political consciousness of the working-class, as this "story" itself shows. The struggle around "managerial functions," 1898; the 1922 lock-out; and the threatened lock-out over the Hoe dispute, 1926, have all been fought by the employers with one purpose—to smash trade unions in the engineering industry. Yet the workers' organisations are numerically stronger and more politically developed than ever before. Nevertheless, this "story" of such struggles does show that, irrespective of the courage of the workers to wage long and bitter struggles, this great force does appear to have wandered about without guide or compass. There does appear, however, to be one exception in 1928, when the rank-and-file National Committee formulated an "Engineers' Charter" and the "story" teller, James B. Jeffreys, states: "This Charter, pointing the way forward on all aspects of union policy, was greeted with enthusiasm by the members."

The story of this great union is a magnificent one, irrespective of how it is narrated. Its battles rank among some of the longest and most bitter in the annals of the working-class history and the results have been among some of the most far-reaching, especially those struggles for the shorter week, sixty, fifty-four and the forty-seven hour weeks.

This great Union, it would appear, now stands at the cross-roads. With all its traditions for struggle, if it can assimilate all the lessons of the past and as a consequence acquire the correct political working-class leadership, it can and will play a great part in the political development of the working-class in this country.

All the progressive forces in this union, from the floor of the workshop to the Executive Council, must study this *Story of the Engineers* and learn the lessons, and having learned such lessons, should go forward bent upon impregnating the whole membership with these lessons and with the correct political and economic deductions for future work. Unless this is done, this "story" will have been written in vain.

JAMES DAVIDSON.

## Shorter Notices

*His Majesty's Ministers and Heads of Public Departments*. (H.M Stationery Office, 6*d*)

WITH THE modern very rapid Cabinet reshuffles and other changes in Government Departments, *Whitaker's Almanack* is liable to be out-of-date in this respect within six months of publication. This short half-yearly list is, however, limited to the Ministers and Heads of Departments, and therefore covers in 44 pages what in *Whitaker* amounts to 100 pages double column small-type. While *Whitaker* remains indispensable, this Stationery Office publication is useful for all M.P.s and for the growing number in the Armed Forces and elsewhere who need a guide to Government Departments.

P. A.



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*Labour in the Philippines Economy* by Kenneth K. Kurihara. (Issued under the auspices of the American Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations, Stanford University Press, xi and 96 pages, $2.00.)

MR. KURIHARA has written the first real study of Labour conditions and the labour movement in the Philippines. In doing so he gives a clear picture of the economy of the islands —the large estates of the landowners and Catholic Church, the exploited peasantry, the domination of U.S. investments, the wretched conditions of the workers, who live far below the absolute minimum standards necessary for health and efficiency. His story ends with the few working-class and peasant victories won under Quezon's presidency. Today the Filipino oligarchy, led by Roxas and backed by MacArthur, is trying forcibly to destroy even the few gains then won.

A. C.

*Assam* by Alban Ali and Eric Lambert. *Iran* by Muhammend Iqbal (Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs, 9*d*, 32 pp.).

MANY OF the thirty-seven pamphlets in this series have been useful, if sometimes provocative, contributions to an understanding of India, her neighbours and her social and economic problems. This was especially so when acknowledged experts surveyed some problem within their own field. The attempt, however, to deal within 32 pages with the climate, flora and fauna, history and culture, political and economic problems of a whole country or Indian province, has not been a success. The historian will gather some interesting facts of ancient history from Assam, but as a whole, the pamphlet reads like a traveller's guide, the political naivete of whose authors finds expression in the statement that "relations between the British and the inhabitants of the country have been cordial."

The pamphlet on Iran also aims to present the facts for the prospective tourist, but where the author briefly touches upon the current political situation he at once reveals a strong anti-Soviet bias by means of slanderous innuendo. The pamphlet manages to omit any mention of trade unionism in Iran or account of the new democratic movement. On the other hand, there is a liberal whitewashing of British oil interests and the Foreign Office's policy in Iran, along with enthusiastic boosting for the social services, communications and "reforms" introduced by the strong man, Riza Shah Pahlevi. In fact, it is somewhat misleading even for the tourist.

M. J. C.


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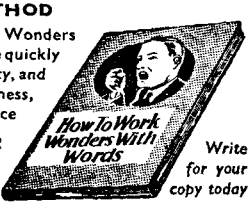


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